

A Semi-Monthly
SUMMARY
of World-Wide
Motion Picture
NEWS

THE CANADIAN MOTION PICTURE EXHIBITOR

Official Organ
of the
INDEPENDENT
THEATRES
ASSOCIATION

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Ban Bouts in Toronto's Parks

MARITIMES EXHIBITORS TO ORGANIZE GROUP

July 10th Set as Date On Which Indies Will Talk Tax and Booking

Two very important questions are occupying exhibitors of the Maritimes at the moment. One is the expected formation of an Independent Buying and Booking Association. The news of N. H. Taylor's plan with Famous Players was well received and has spurred interest in organization. The Maritimes has been hard hit by the depression and the war boom has had little or no effect so far. The first meeting of the projected body will be held on July 10.

The majority of theatres in the Maritimes are in small villages and there is practically no industrial activity. There are about 70 theatres, a number of which are closed for part of the year. About 30 theatres are in towns and villages where the population varies between 500 and 2,000; there are 17 in towns from 2,000 to 5,000; there are 5 theatres operating in cities from 20,000 to 65,000. This

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Maybe We Should Have Told Him

The taxi that was carrying Bob Hope downtown after his Pier appearance at Sunnyside was thumbed by a ten-year-old who squeaked, "Give us a lift, mister?"

The car was crammed, there being a couple of other fellows in it besides Hope, his press agent, Mack Millar, and Bruce Keith of the Star.

"Sure, hop in," said Bob.

The youngster crowded in and joined the conversation. After a four-mile ride he got out with a thanks and a goodbye.

Hope had just fought his way through hundreds of kids who would have given anything to be in that same spot.

But the hitch-hiker didn't know it. Nobody told him. And he didn't recognize Bob. A shame.

The Legality of Foto-Nite

Following inquiries received from Exhibitors in the West as to what effect Foto-Nite has on the theatre business and as to whether or not it is legal, we did in our issue of May 15th, 1941, publish an article under the heading "The Legality of Foto-Nite."

Objection to this article has been taken by Foto-Nite Amateur Shows Ltd.

The article contains the statement—"Moreover, even those theatres which employ it have always felt that the initial success does not last long and that the affair soon peters out."

Upon investigation we cannot find sufficient information to substantiate this statement and we hereby unhesitatingly withdraw the same.

We are advised that a large number of theatres, including some operated by Famous Players Corporation and the Hanson Theatres Corporation, have used Foto-Nite for almost two years with extraordinary success and we are further advised that Foto-Nite is as beneficial to these theatres today as when it first started.

As to the legality of Foto-Nite we have been informed:-

(a) That a theatre owner, who was running a Foto-Nite contest in Winnipeg, was charged with conducting a lottery. This charge came on for hearing in October, 1940, before Judge Donovan of the Superior Court of Manitoba, sitting with a jury, and after a four-day trial the theatre owner was acquitted.

It appears that Foto-Nite has been operating freely in the Province of Manitoba since that date;

(b) That in the Province of Ontario an indictment was returned by a grand jury against a Toronto theatre owner for using Foto-Nite, charging him with conducting a lottery. At the opening of the trial the indictment was quashed on the ground that it disclosed no offence. Subsequently a second indictment was presented with the same result. The Crown appealed the second ruling and the appeal was dismissed.

From the above and from the fact that it appears that Foto-Nite has been operating in Ontario since that time, it is quite clear that we should not have passed any opinion on the legality of Foto-Nite

We wish to take this opportunity to apologize to Foto-Nite Amateur Shows Limited for the inconvenience caused them by the publication of the said article. This paper hopes that this public retraction will at least in some small measure compensate Foto-Nite for any damage it may have suffered as a result.

THE CANADIAN MOTION PICTURE EXHIBITOR

No Change in Midtown Status

Newspaper reports that a change had taken place in the operation and control of Toronto's Midtown Theatre are apparently incorrect. The Toronto Evening Telegram recently said:

"A merger of Canadian theatres was announced today with Sam Firestone, who controls the Mid-

town, Esquire, Mayfair and Astor theatres in Toronto, and the Esquire Theatre in Brantford linking up with the Odeon Theatre chain throughout Canada."

Since the Midtown Theatre was recently opened as a 20th Century theatre, a statement was sought from Mr. Taylor as to the switch-

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Commissioner Chambers Turns Down Try as Church Offers Support

Toronto exhibitors, hit hard by heat, tax and blackout, just missed getting another consistent clout on the cash register. The Dentonia Senior Softball League, arranged boxing bouts on their diamond for one of the war efforts. C. E. Chambers, Parks Commissioner, made them call off the proceedings.

At the same time the Toronto East Presbytery went on record as supporting the Commissioner's stand and protesting any further plans of the kind.

Mr. Chambers explained that he didn't consider boxing proper entertainment for women and children. Though the park is city property, no permit was sought or given. J. Jefferies, president of the League, stated that he thought permission from the Ontario Athletic Commission was enough.

There are 103 recreation parks and playground areas in Toronto, well distributed in every community. More than 800 teams, members of almost 100 leagues, attract crowds to these parks nightly. The business has learned to allow for sports competition. If the idea of extra entertainment for nickels and dimes spreads, it will result in a serious situation.

Against the idea is Charlie Lewis, one of Toronto's deans of sports. He is president of the Toronto Softball League, which has

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Harry Kohn Becomes Calgary Branch Mgr.

Toronto.—Harry Kohn has been promoted to the post of branch manager of Vitagraph, Ltd., in Calgary, according to an announcement today by Wolfe Cohen, Canadian district manager for the film company.

Kohn was previously senior salesman in the branch. Sam Pearlman, his predecessor, has been transferred to another position with the Company.

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HYE BOSSIN
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Maritimes Join

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leaves about 18 theatres operating in places between 5,000 and 10,000 in population.

The war activity has had a definitely worse effect. Many young men have joined the armed forces and with little additional money loose in that part of Canada, there have been no compensating factors. The gloom that has pervaded business in those areas since 1930-31 caused many exhibitors to interest themselves in some other form of gainful activity while operating their houses.

Now, with the new tax added to theatre headaches, it has been predicted that many Maritimes theatres will close. Exhibitors are especially irked by the failure of the legislation to take into account dancing, games of chance for charity purposes and other amusements of that nature. Many of these are permitted to give away sums ranging from \$100 to \$500.

The Maritimes exhibitors are desperate and determined. The evils will be aired soon and efforts made to correct them.

Ban Park Bouts

(Continued from Page 1)

almost fifty teams under its jurisdiction.

"The parks are for recreation purposes," said Mr. Lewis, "and boxing is not a recreation. If that's the only way people can be attracted, then there's something wrong with the league. Good baseball doesn't need anything like that to draw crowds. I am absolutely against boxing or anything like it in the parks."

The issue is not completely closed. "Our Commissioner is definitely against it," said a Parks Department official, "but we don't know how far his opposition will carry."

Tax? What Tax?

The theme of the recent Victory loan was money and more money. The whole country is gratified that Ottawa's appeal for dollars was met heartily. Yet, while asking for money to borrow, the government has ignored a great and regular sum to be had for the taking. And with no need of future return.

Section 121 (a) of Bill 88, which deals with the 20 per cent tax on movies, specifies as also taxable "any theatrical performance, carnival, circus, side show, menagerie, concert, exhibition, horse race or athletic contest."

And here's the curious side of the matter. Bill 88 was passed on June 2nd—a month ago. That's two weeks after the tax on movie tickets went into action. But it hasn't been applied yet to all the amusements mentioned above which are specified in the act.

Why? Doesn't the government need the money? Obviously it does. Every day thousands of untaxed dollars are being spent.

The act, having been extended to cover all amusements, patron and promoter have been waiting to pay the tax but the government hasn't asked for it. With movie prices up while other attractions remain the same, motion pictures lose some of their appeal as a cheaper form of entertainment.

The result is that erstwhile movie-goes are taking taxable dollars to non-taxable places. Thus, on one hand, the government has no tax revenue, and, on the other, reduced returns.

This at a time when every dollar serves a vital need.

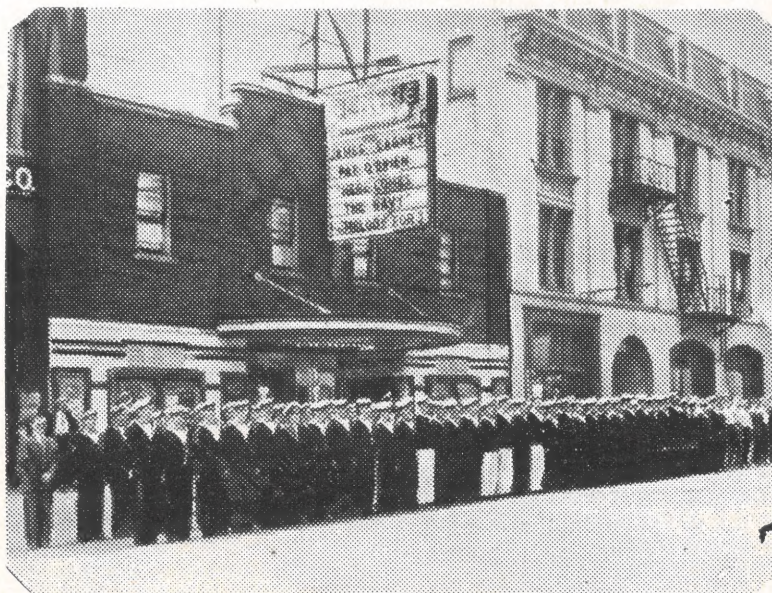
And the exhibitor, loyal and patient in the face of unfair customer competition, is getting hit in the fuselage.

No Change in Midtown Status

(Continued from Page 1)

ing to the Odeon banner. Mr. Taylor clarified the situation as follows: "The Midtown Theatre is owned and operated by Midtown Theatre Ltd., a private joint stock company of which Mr. Firestone does not own stock control. Booking and operating control is vested by contract in Exhibitors Booking

Association. In order to cancel this agreement, it would be necessary to call a meeting of the Directors to discuss this or any new proposed agreement. No meeting has been called and I think I can state with some certainty that we will continue to operate the Midtown Theatre as in the past."



Men of the R.C.N.V.R. were guests of Manager Al Perly at the Centre Theatre, London, recently in connection with the showing of "Here Comes The Navy." It gave the Reserve men a chance to see life as they will come to know it soon in Canada's fleet.

Can. Warners To Convene

Toronto. — The 1941 Canadian District Meeting of Vitagraph, Ltd., the distributing organization for Warner Bros.-First National Pictures and Vitaphone short subjects, will be held July 15-16 at the Mount Royal Hotel, Montreal, Wolfe Cohen, Dominion manager, said today. Mr. Cohen will preside at the conferences.

The purpose of the gathering will be to discuss production and sales policy for 1941-42 product, and is being held in Canada, apart from the Warner Bros. convention in the United States, primarily because selling policy here will materially differ from that in the States, where recently enacted decrees to govern film distribution have been set up.

Holding the separate Canadian sessions also seem to be a modest gesture toward conserving Canadian currency.

Among those attending from the home office in New York City will be Gradwell L. Sears and Carl Leserman, president and vice-president, respectively, of Vitagraph, Ltd.; Roy Haines and Ben Kalmenson, respectively in charge of eastern and Canadian and southern and western sales; and Norman H. Moray, short subjects manager.

The Canadian territory will be represented by Joseph Plottel, Toronto Branch manager; Alfred E. Piggins, district booker; Harry Law, salesman, Toronto; Glenn Ireton, district press representative; Lewis McKenzie, St. John branch manager; Philip Sherman and G. Kieley, manager and salesman, Montreal branch; Louis Geller and Frank Davis, manager and salesman, Winnipeg branch; Harry Kohn, manager, Calgary branch; and I. "Babe" Coval, manager, Vancouver branch.

Details of the new Canadian selling policy will be released at the termination of the meeting.

Projectionists Try New Loan Idea

The Motion Picture Projectionists hit on an idea worth remembering to assist the recent Victory Loan. The Toronto local decided that each member would put five dollars into a fund to buy extra bonds. Each member had subscribed individually also.

The plan spread to all the locals in Eastern Canada. Then the Eleventh District of the International Alliance of Stage Employees and Projectionists, made up of unions in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, picked it up. A nice sum of extra money was turned over to the campaign.

Most of the members of the Toronto local are veterans of the first Great War.

City Fellers And Country Stuff

Visitors to the EBA offices the other quiet Saturday morning were puzzled by faint grunts and onk-onks coming from somewhere near. Some of them were startled when, visiting the washroom, they found themselves sharing it with a refugee from a Disney film—a cute, twisty-tailed piglet.

The slick city place turned into old home week for some of them. Got to talking about boy-hood days with the cows and the chickens until you expected to hear somebody holler: "Get about your ploughin' and milk-in', you lazy loafers. It'll be sun-down soon!"

A couple of the office boys, intrigued by bacon on the hoof, were just about ready to kidnap it. Probably never saw a porker outside of pictures. They thought better of it, not being sure whether it bit or sprayed.

This little piggie belonged to our Frank Meyers, who has a farm on the lakeshore and raises plain and prize flesh and fowl. He brought the little fellow in as a gift to a friend.

Talking about rural life and civic slickers, this might be a good place to tell what happened to Ruby Cass and some friends on a country road. They thought they were lost and asked a native how to get to their destination.

"Right ahead," he answered. "About two good looks and a right smart git!"

Change of Address

The Motion Picture Distributors Association and Canadian Film Boards of Trade have moved their offices from 277 Victoria Street to 105 Bond Street. The phone number is ELgin 8919.

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On the Square

By HYE BOSSIN

The poet who wrote about the Hope that springs eternal must have meant the Bob of that breed.

Maybe there's a gamer and nicer fellow in the world than Paramount's Bob Hope. If you know him, show him to us. He visited Toronto for the Daily Star's Red Cross fund for the British Bomb Victims. Broke up a vacation to do it. Don't believe it if you want to but the opening of his picture at the Uptown next day was just a coincidence. He stood a town on its ear that has seen more stars lately than the RAF could fly over.

Hope had a ding-dong day. In the morning the mayor and body receptioned him and in the early afternoon he carried on at Manning Pool before fliers from over all the world, creating a commotion the like of which that stop-off for celebs hadn't seen before. Then he played golf with theatre men. In the evening he entertained thousands at the Strathcona Palace Pier. After that he sat himself down and signed autographed pictures at a buck a throw.

The crowd roughed him and cuffed him but Bob came up smiling. The signature-seekers weren't glamor-gone dames by a long shot. Soldiers, sailors, fliers and officers paid over their dollars for a scribble and jibe. After that a party with exchange and exhib men. In the morning he planed out.

Everybody voted him the swellest and most approachable star to ever hit here.

With him was a gentleman of the press agents, Mack Millar of Hollywood. Jack Karr of the Star joined Jack Burgess and Jimmy Hill of the Pier in putting it over. The place has been empty for fourteen years and Hope brought it to life with a bang.

Gary Cass has a good reason to be even madder at Hitler—if such a thing is possible. He wagered two days before it happened that the Nazis wouldn't let go at Russia—because the Slavs would kick in to their demands. They didn't and it cost Cass ten bucks . . . Benny Granatstien, who runs the newsstand in the Film Exchange Building, gives 10 per cent of his take periodically to the Evening Telegram's War Victims' Fund. They did a piece about Benny's big-heartedness—which the proud patriot pasted on the wall for all to see.

The film exchange lads and lasses have been snaffing this paper wherever they can. We suggest, for the time being, that they send the draft clerk or the office boy over for a batch about the middle and first of every month. You're welcome . . . A magazine recently got laughs by printing a cartoon of a dish salesman giving away a film with every purchase! . . . Frances Shelley, who used to be a musical comedy star, is a receptionist at Famous Players and Thelma Golden, the town's top girl pitcher, is in the Paramount offices.

Tom Pringle, probably the oldest active exhibitor around here, is in circulation again and enlivening the exchanges. Tom was down for a spell—but there's too much going on these days for a man to be wasting his time being sick, ain't there, Tom? . . . A couple of bright Toronto boys are Jeff Hurley and Irv Title. They dreamed up a radio play called "The Land is Bright" and CBC grabbed it. The title is from the poem quoted by Winston Churchill in a recent broadcast. Rupert Caplan of Montreal will produce it and play the lead—if Robert Montgomery, an active pro-ally, can't make it. Montgomery liked the thing and is anxious to do it on the air.

In Lowered Tones: Col. J. A. Cooper—Thank you, sir . . . Irving Hoffman, Holly'd Reporter: I followed your suggestion Will let you know how I make out. Denks . . . A. J. Mason, Springhill, N. S.: Okay? Good Luck.

The Casino Theatre crowd organized a grand whoop at the Chudleigh House the other night for Jackie Katz of the orchestra. Murray Little, though temporarily tangled up with arthritis, hobbled around passing the word and Maestro Curly Posen got together the dangest bill of movie and flesh entertainment the town has seen in many a day. Strictly at \$6.60 show. Though Katz plays the tune the boys who listen, sing and dance to it—and even the ones who call the tune—turned out for a gay fare-well to Jackie's bachelor days. It was as swell a stunt of its kind as we've seen in years of stag-going.

Centre and Park Open in Chatham

Chatham had the most exciting week in its movie history between June 23rd and the 30th. Two of the finest theatres in Ontario, the Centre and the Park, were opened with plenty of fuss and feathers Mayor W. C. Hubbell proclaimed a "Go-to-a-Movie-Week" and it looks as though the citizens took it seriously.

The Park, a Famous Players house handled by Twentieth Century Theatres under the new pact, was opened on Monday, June 23rd. In the absence of the mayor, one of the aldermen was on hand to lead the ceremonies. On Thursday, June 26th, Twentieth Century opened The Centre. Mayor Hubbell, civic dignitaries and Twentieth Century executives were on hand.

CFCL, Chatham, covered the doings before and after. Interviewers got good audience reaction for listeners. M. L. Axler handled both openings.

Chatham has two other theatres, the Granada and Capitol. The new houses have doubled the town's theatre standing.

Giveaways Fade

In Philadelphia interest in something for nothing is definitely drooping. Some patrons even ignore the dish. Only three houses in one 40-house circuit is continuing with the comeons. Indies are following the tide and letting business be itself.

Find Singles Okay

The Lone Star State customers have a definite preference for one feature at a time. A recent survey proved it. Oklahoma also shows the same inclination. Exhibitors everywhere are studying the findings, some of them nervously because of the fear of change.

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DIGEST of REVIEWS



REGAL

BLOSSOMS IN THE DUST

A sentimental story in Technicolor, with Greer Garson doing a feminine Father Flanagan. Walter Pidgeon handles the masculine lead and there's a bunch of fine supporting players, among them Marsha Hunt, Fay Holden, Samuel S. Hinds and Henry O'Neil. It's a bit long on reelage and short on comedy but will satisfy the folks and yield exploitation tieup with social groups. The women will love it.

THE PROSPECTING BEAR

A non-dialogue, loud and laughy cartoon about a Beeryish bear and a peanut-sized burro. Tricks with dynamite yield the gags.

UNDERGROUND

VITAGRAPH

An anti-Nazi melodrama full of thrills and excitement. A fine piece of work. Jeff Lynn is the only name player but word-of-mouth should do a great deal of good. Other outstanding players are Philip Dorn, Kaaren Vern, Ludwig Stossel, Mona Maris and Wolfgang Zilzer.

THE BRIDE CAME C.O.D.

Jim Cagney and Bette Davis in the latter's first comedy. Davis is a screwy millionairess kidnapped by Cagney for her father, Eugene Palette. The idea is to keep her from marrying an orchestra leader. Of course, after much scrapping back and forth she marries Jim instead. Not very convincing. George Tobias, getting bigger in comedy standings with each picture, is in it. Picture has name draws.

REPUBLIC

PUDDIN'HEAD

Judy Canova, in the news lately, will please her followers with this one. It has a good story and regular laughs. They've given her heavy male comic competition with important laugh-getters such as Raymond Walburn, Slim Summerville and Eddie Foy, Jr. And Francis Lederer gets back before the public in it.

EMPIRE-UNIVERSAL

IT'S TURNED OUT NICE AGAIN

George Formby, the British buffoon, is back again in this domestic yarn. Though not as big a picture as his previous ones, its general nature guarantees it an even wider appeal to patrons who may have regarded his type of comedy mildly. The laughs are there in the same abundant proportion. Formby plays a worm that turns, the turning being accompanied by music, pretty girls, Ronald Ward, Peggy Ryan and Hay Petrie.

FOX

THE RICHEST MAN IN TOWN

Small town story. Just ambles along but human. Frank Craven and Edgar Buchanan, who distinguished himself in "Penny Serenade," carry it. Roger Pryor is the sharpie come to bilk the rustics who is reformed by his love for Eileen O'Hearn. For the lower deck.

MOON OVER MIAMI

A full-bodied Technicolor musical full of drawing cards. Songs, comedy, turns, top-notch color, eight songs and plenty of production numbers. There isn't much doubt about customer reaction here. Don Ameche, Betty Grable, Carole Landis, Charlotte Greenwood, Jack Haley and Robert Cummings will crowd the marquee and the theatre.

Hollywood Theatres Find Different Selling Angles

The Hollywood movie patron has what is perhaps the most jaded film appetite of fans anywhere. The citizens of the cinema suburb—that is, the workaday ones, not the picture people—often laugh and applaud in the wrong places. They've seen so much screen fare that they have a fine sense of what is popularly called "corn." It takes something good or different to satisfy them.

That makes it tough on the independent exhibitor. He has to come up with some pretty cute ideas of various kinds to keep the ushers busy.

For instance, a theatre called The Laugh Parade has a Chaplin Festival—and it's in its eighth week. The bill is made up of Sid Chaplin's famous old-time feature, "Charley's Aunt" and four Charlie Chaplin two-reelers. In view of all the publicity on Jack Benny's forthcoming version of "Charlie's Aunt" and Charlie Chaplin's current popularity, this is smart booking.

Another house, the Movie Parade, has a run of the late Rudolph Valentino's "Son of the Shiek." Doubtless cashing in on the constant use of Valentino's name in connection with 20th Century-Fox's "Blood and Sand." The late latin lover played it in the silents and the Fox publicity boys made much of the fact in plugging Tyrone Power's present version.

Then there's Music Lovers' Month at the Hawaii Theatre. Two pictures devoted to the life of Franz Schubert, the great musician, are featured. Both are for-

eign films. One is "Schubert's Serenade" and the other "Schubert's Unfinished Symphony." They get the long-hair custom.

The Oriental Theatre advertises a Triple Horror Show and a place called The Hitching Post plays westerns only. That's for those who like their stimulants straight. In Hollywood the theatre men have a keen eye for half-forgotten appearances of current favorites. The Gordon, as the top part of a double bill, offers Bob Hope, Betty Grable and Burns & Allen in "College Swing."

Advertising is highly-potent stuff. A drive-in screenery, playing a picture called "Reefer Madness," uses these ad lines in the Hollywood Citizen-News: "Weeds of Hell—See What Happens at Marihuana Parties." The illustration is pretty lurid too. Eastern exhibitors wouldn't dare do that and it's doubtful if newspapers would accept that kind of copy.

Some of the houses are as radically different as their screen fare. One has a Privacy Lounge for stars who want to watch a picture in peace, older people who don't like crowds, and disabled people who prefer to keep their infirmities from the public eye.

The Privacy Lounge has six seats in the centre of the balcony. The walls are black velvet, the seats black mohair and there's a plate glass between the spectators and the screen. The whole effect is that of a dark room.

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The Gold is 'Underground'

How to blend popular elements with deeply serious matter to make a vital film is still a problem that is generally unsolved. If adornment is omitted to make the message stand out bright and clear the film seems bare to most patrons. If it is served surrounded by glorified guff the presentation lacks conviction, though the public reception is better.

There are exceptions. And there are times when motion picture people wish hard for a certain picture draw crowds—and not just for the receipts. The hope that as many people as possible will absorb its ideas is greater than any commercial interest.

Such a picture is Warner Brothers' "Underground." It has more suspense than anything since "The Informer," more sincerity than any thousand others. It's as important, as timely and as full of finely-presented beliefs as a speech by Winston Churchill.

It's as honest technically as it is in sentiment. Here is no enchanted world that one leaves behind in the theatre. Because there is no reliance on names, it is cast perfectly. Jeffrey Lynn is the only player of current note.

Instead of glamor there is the beauty of staunch truth. It needs neither hysteria nor bravado to make its meaning clear. It moves towards its credo in a calculated and sure way. Romance and comedy are present in the exact proportion necessary.

In it men die that others may live. Their nobleness and idealism isn't demonstrated but plainly realized by the spectator. You believe completely in their reasons. So will millions in the United States and South America whose minds are not yet made up all the way.

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Picture Pickups

By TAP KEYES

The threat of a gasolineless Sunday has started a bike boom. Okay, exhibits, start giving 'em away . . . Ed Arnold has dropped over 20 lbs. for his next picture, leaving the leadership of the lusty, gusty lads to Laird Cregar . . . By the time television reaches the main street houses it will probably be in color. They're working on it now . . . Time to revise the old saw about the three best ways to spread news. Now it's telephone, telegraph, television and tell-a-woman.

* * * * *

The Ritz boys were playing Boston and were besieged by autographiends in a night club. Three smarties shoved pink slips at them and the boys signed their sigs. They turned out to be dinner checks! . . . Ned Sparks, now lingering around here, had the handwriting hounds after him at a recent boxing-match. One guy pushed something at him and he signed it. It was a liquor permit.

* * * * *

Johnny Weismuller has made but five flickers in the past ten years. But not once has he missed getting his weekly bundle of bucks from the studio . . . Regis Toomey is the country's favorite "corpse." He's been bumped off in celluloid style for years. And he just set a record for successive thespian deceases, having been killed in six straight pictures . . . The adding addicts announce that the general figure of 80,000,000 movie patrons per week has dropped to 52,000,000 during this slump.

* * * * *

Eduardo Cianelli, the screenie meanie, has a tough time outside of Hollywood. No sooner does he get off the train in a big town than a couple of detectives grab him and start asking questions. The cops, watching for incoming hoodlums, recognize a face vaguely familiar and surely associated with bad business. So Cianelli has to prove each time that where they saw him was on the screen and not the police lineup.

* * * * *

"No wonder business has gone to H--l," observes Harold V. Cohen. "Look at the recent titles. There's 'The Devil and Miss Jones,' 'The Devil and Dan'l Webster' and 'The Devil's Pipeline'."

* * * * *

Pictures I'd like to see again: "Skippy" . . . Lupe Velez will play a lady bullfighter in the next Kay Kyser RKO feature, "Playmates" . . . Roses of yesterday blooming again: Gloria Swanson . . . Bea Lillie, the Canadian star who's been in England all through the blitz, will come to the States for British War Relief work . . . Forgotten fancies: Ann Harding.

* * * * *

Frank Morgan owns the Angustora Bitters Company. What's the matter, Frank—don't you think moving pictures are here to stay? . . . Pascal's first in Canada will be a Paul Gallico story with a Canadian background . . . Fleischer's Technitoon, "Mr. Bug Goes to Town," will cost \$1,000,000, use 500,000 drawings and occupy 500 artists. Some paint job!

* * * * *

Whether the U.S. takes its turn at bat or not, Hollywood ought to be declared a military city. There will soon be more uniforms there than in any fair-sized fight. In all, 52 full-length features based on war subjects are finished or in work. Five of these are serials . . . Now that we're war-minded—Dave Butler, the director, once directed a scene that cost \$20,000 to set up. The climax of it was the dynamiting of the whole shebang at the sound of a trumpet call. Sure enough, the call came and the scene was blown to bits. But not a camera was grinding. The trumpeter had been rehearsing!

* * * * *

Santinfias, Mexico's leading comedian, is making a picture called "Neither Blood Nor Sand." Sounds like a rib . . . Hoover, ex-prexy of the States, wears only blue serge suits. He hasn't got a thing on Clarence Brown, the director. Brown has over 100 ties exactly alike and won't wear any other kind. Pooh, pooh! I get the same effect with my single 49-center . . . One-line limn of W. C. Fields: Old Mumble-Fumble-Stumble. I see where Bill is still making the moist of each day.

Maybe She Knows About Pictures Too?

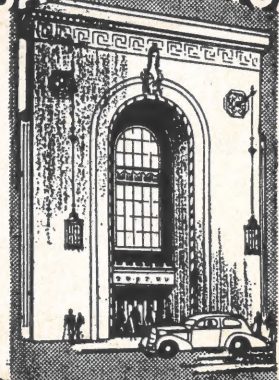
Everyone has heard the legendary gag that Irving Berlin has a little colored boy who thinks up all his tunes. It's so old now the kid must be Old Black Joe. But Ruth Lowe, the Toronto miss who wrote "I'll Never Smile Again," has her own future-finder—a Toronto fortune-teller.

Ruth is in town for a spell. She stopped by The Square to hello old friends and this interesting item cropped up.

A couple of years ago, when Ruthie was pounding the piano in local bands, this fortune-teller told her she'd write America's leading hit song. She did. After that the breaks soured. The ASCAP-BMI tangle kept her follow-up stuff off the air. Then she made her film debut with "Too Beautiful to Last" in "Ziegfeld Girl." The scene was dropped but the song was kept in as background music. That doesn't help sell song copies and records.

So when Ruth got home she sought out the seer again. The lady told her she'd write a smash patriotic song about love. Ruth rushed back to the family piano, on which she had composed the other one, and came up with "My Two Loves (America and You)."

If this one clicks she thinks she'll offer the fortune-teller a seven-year no-option contract.

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The press-preview feud is still ablaze. As predicted, the exhibitors entered into it wholeheartedly at the recent MPTOA convention in Hollywood. The battle is now in its tenth week.

Ed Kuykendall, president of the association, called "the branding and labeling of pictures as good, bad or indifferent by the so-called Hollywood columnists, commentators and critics long in advance of their exhibition to the public" the industry's most serious problem today.

"There is no other commercial enterprise of comparable size and importance in the world today that would stand for or tolerate such pre-judgment and arbitrary, unofficial grading of its product," he said. "Certainly, Mr. Ford would not permit, nor would the commentators on automobiles presume, to come out with a line in their columns: 'Don't buy a Ford car this year—the new model will have a bad paint job!' Or Campbell's Soup—'Lay off Campbell's Soups this year—the new line coming out soon tastes awful!'"

"We don't want the producers to suppress honest criticism. We firmly believe in freedom of the press and freedom of speech—obviously, because we want freedom of the screen, which combines both freedoms. But we don't want our merchandise condemned before we have any chance to put it on sale to the public, just because some correspondent or commentator out here in Hollywood, who may have entirely different tastes and preferences from the people in my section of the country, does not care for the picture.

"You have killed off its chances of success before we can even advertise the picture by enabling the commentators to give it a fixed grading or rating, even though our own local newspaper reviewers and the people who do see the

picture later on may think it is very good entertainment.

"Who among the hundreds of commentators and reviewers for the lay press in Hollywood feels qualified to pre-judge a picture for the tastes of Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, Dallas, Akron, Kalamazoo and Columbus, Mississippi. Each locality has different tastes and prejudices, different problems of exhibition, different points of view which the local critics and commentators know and feel.

"The so-called Hollywood press previews have been going on for years, I know, but it seems to get worse and to do more and more damage to our business as the years go by. The legitimate stage never had this to contend with. There is no pre-judgment of stage shows, nor even of radio programs. A new play is advertised and no reviews or critical comment are possible until the next day—and the play lives or dies on its merits.

"We recommend as a constructive solution to this vital problem: first, that the trade press alone see and review new pictures in advance of actual release and at trade showings under the new consent decree, for the information and guidance of exhibitors and those within the business, and second, that no advance press previews be provided or permitted in Hollywood in advance of the first public exhibition or opening of the picture anywhere in the country."

The press previewers are fighting back. James Francis Crow, reviewer for The Hollywood Citizen-News, Look and other publications, has this to say about Kuykendall's stand:

"He believes that this function should be reserved for the trade papers, like the Hollywood Reporter and Daily Variety and the Quigley Publications, which serve Kuykendall and the other exhibitors.

"He believes, in other words, that the exhibitors have a right to know whether pictures are good, bad, or indifferent before THEY buy them, but he denies by clear implication that the public has a right to the same information before the THE PUBLIC buys them.

"What is Kuykendall going to do about the mothers and fathers who want to know about photoplays before they send their children to see them? Doubtless Kuykendall thinks it would be a good plan if the mothers and fathers went to see the photoplays first—after paying the proper price—and then, if they think the pictures are okay, buy other tickets for their children.

"Newspapers don't criticize

Ford automobiles or Campbell Soups, says Kuykendall. But Ford automobiles and Campbell Soups come guaranteed. You can drive a Ford around the block before you buy it. You can take a bad tin of soup back to your grocer, and he'll give you your money back. Will Kuykendall make the same offer to the picture patrons to whom he sells "Affectionately Yours"?

"Kuykendall says he is in favor of honest criticism and a free press. He is in favor of honest criticism AFTER he has sold his pictures to the public. He is in favor of the press being free as long as it is free at the time established by Kuykendall.

"Just wait until I give you the word, boys," says Kuykendall.

An unexpected supporter in some measure of Kuykendall's sentiments is Beau Broadway, Hollywood representative of the New York Telegraph. In an article on the subject he wrote: "The truth is, and no honest man will deny it, that the Hollywood correspondents had advanced themselves en masse to a place where they had virtually a stranglehold on Hollywood."

The question isn't settled yet. There'll be some fun before it is.

Republic Plans Streamlined Pic

Frank Albertson, Robert Armstrong, Linda Hayes and Skeets Gallagher head the cast of Republic's "Ten Nights In A Barroom," which is now in production.

This picture is one of Republic's streamlined melodrama specials, and is a story of the alcohol tax unit of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Action is laid in the West Virginia mountains.

The film marks a comeback for Skeets Gallagher, the comedian's last picture being "Idiot's Delight."

George Sherman is associate producer-director for Republic.

Also in the cast are William Hade, Russell Simpson, Jay Novello, Billy Benedict, and Claude Stroud.

* * *

"Sunset in Wyoming" is the final title for Republic's Gene Autry-Smylye Burnette picture now in work. Maris Wrixon, who was borrowed from Warners, has the feminine lead.

The picture was originally tentatively titled "Under Fiesta Stars." William Morgan directs for Republic. Harry Grey is associate producer.

Autry sings six songs in "Sunset in Wyoming," including "There's a Home in Wyoming," "Sing Me a Song of the Saddle," "21 Years," "Casey Jones," "Happy Cowboy," and "Sing Up for Happy Days." Burnette warbles solo on "Heebie Jeebie Blues."

Curtiz Directs RCAF Feature

Michale Curtiz has been assigned by Warner Bros. to direct "Captains of the Clouds," story of the Canadian Royal Air Force. Curtiz recently finished "Dive Bomber," Warner picture co-starring Errol Flynn and Fred MacMurray.

* * *

Gene Lockhart and Moroni Olsen have been added by Warner Bros. to the cast of "One Foot In Heaven," which co-stars Fredric March and Martha Scott. The picture, now in production, is being directed by Irving Rapper.

* * *

Ending a seven-weeks' search, Warner Bros. has signed two youngsters for important roles in "Kings Row," film version of Henry Bellamann's best-selling novel.

Scotty Beckett, only ten years old but a veteran actor, was signed for one part while the other went to Douglas Wheatcroft, eleven, who will make his acting debut in the picture to be directed by Sam Wood for Warners.

Children are still being sought by Warners to portray three more of the principals in childhood. In addition to Reagan and Cummings, the principals so far cast for "Kings Row" include Ann Sheridan, James Stephenson, Maria Ouspenskaya, Barbara O'Neil and Harry Davenport.

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RKO Radio Plans Westerns

Six outdoor dramas starring Tim Holt will be part of RKO Radio's program for the 1941-42 season, it was announced at this company's Tenth Annual Sales Convention in New York City.

Bert Gilroy, a veteran of outdoor pictures who held the production reins on most of the George O'Brien films, will continue in charge of production of the new Holt series. He will select exceptional leading ladies. These have already played opposite young Holt: Betty Jane Rhodes, called "the first lady of television"; Virginia Vale, who was leading lady in six O'Brien features; Martha O'Driscoll and Marjorie Reynolds.

As before, Ray Whitley, singing cowboy, will be featured, leading his Six Bar Cowboys in songs of his composition. He will write an original theme song for each picture, which will be the film's title.

The direction of the Tim Holt Westerns will be by David Howard, who directed twenty-eight George O'Brien outdoor dramas, and Edward Killy, who directed the first series of Tim Holt pictures. On close schedules, they will alternate.

Some of these films will have in their casts Lee "Lasses" White, ex-minstrel favorite; Morris Anrum as a "heavy"; and Helen Holmes, once a star of the New York and London stages.

Carol Curtis-Brown, who makes her film debut in RKO Radio's "Before the Fact," starring Cary Grant and Joan Fontaine, has spent seven of her twenty years in the theatre.

Director Alfred Hitchcock offered Miss Curtis-Brown a role in his second RKO Radio picture shortly after she completed the ingenue part in the Gladys George starring Broadway play "Lady in Waiting" and came West to try her luck.

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Shorter Features?

The making of motion pictures has undergone many changes since the early days of the industry. Sound, animated cartoons and Technicolor have added immensely to the screen's richness. But it's still the story that counts. That's where the heart and mind appeal comes from.

Interest in what's happening to the characters is what keeps the customers in their seats and what brings them back. All the visual beauty and aural novelty you can cram into a picture won't satisfy the patrons if the story won't jell. Some English bard wrote a long time ago that "the proper study of mankind is man." It's still true.

Much of the recent lack of interest in new films is being blamed on the sameness of the general product. New and different ideas in plot and telling are needed. Where can they be had? Well, David Selznick knows and he's busy digging them out right now.

For years Hollywood has neglected the most popular, varied and richest story market in the world—the short story. It has been ignored as such. Now and then someone dips into it and stretches his choice past the natural length—a violation of its chief principle, brevity. Only the most expert treatment will make it stand up.

Short stories, filmed in three or four reels, or in the length the author gave them, would be a new adventure for the industry. The flavor would be retained. Such yarns as Bret Harte's "The Luck of Roaring Camp" or his "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" would be sure-fire stuff. And how about the brief tales of O. Henry, Damon Runyon, Irvin S. Cobb, De Maupassant and many others? There are tragedies, comedies and mysteries. Sound and color would give them the life that long-ago two-reel attempts didn't have.

Drama wouldn't be a long and dreary experience so often. Comedy wouldn't be "milked" to last the accepted feature length. Sure direction would be easier to attain. Pace wouldn't be such a problem. There would be more stars and a greater variety of faces. There wouldn't be the constant reliance on the stock love story, the rags-to-riches routine, the inevitable happy ending and all the things that have become cut and dried.

The exhibitor could get a fine balance of comedy and drama. The love of change that made vaudeville a gold mine for so many years could come into its own again. People wouldn't mind seeing the same short twice. In vaudeville days they even looked forward to it. Short story fans re-read the same tale a number of times. But how many people read a full-length novel twice or care

to see a long feature more than once?

Writing and motion pictures are both narrative forms. But writing is flexible and has many patterns, thus giving the story its best form and the exact time it needs for telling. On the other hand, movie makers seem to have set a standard length and fixed a rigid pattern for features. They fit everything, suitable or not, whether too long or too short, into it.

Studio writers must maneuver all stories, whether original or adapted, to suit the rule. Whoever heard of such a practice in any other creative art? It's like cramming things into a trunk — or stuffing it with extra odds and ends so that the proper contents won't rattle.

The idea of shorter features has been mooted before. Hal Roach speaking to the MPTOA, announced streamline pictures. His new product will be condensed to 45 minutes and over, with 60 minutes being the limit. This, he pointed out, would enable the exhibitor to present six shows daily.

Selznick and Roach have the right idea. The result of their experimentations may be a new lease on life for the business.

United Artists Stars Sabu

Alexander Korda has set Monday, July 7, as the day on which production will start on his new film, "The Jungle Book." Based on the famous Rudyard Kipling story and produced in Technicolor, "The Jungle Book" will represent one of the major Hollywood works of the year.

Sabu, discovered by Alexander Korda a number of years ago as the "Elephant Boy" and subsequently starred in "Drums" and "The Trier of Bagdad," will be seen in the leading role of Mowgli. Korda has also signed a young newcomer to the screen for the role of Mahala. She is Patricia O'Rourke, 14-year-old youngster who will make her debut in this film. Others already cast include Jerome Cowan and Rosemary DeCamp.

The production is under the direction of Zoltan Korda, from the screenplay by Laurence Stallings.

"The Corsican Brothers," based on the Alexandre Dumas story, is scheduled for early production and will be released by United Artists. Gregory Ratoff will direct.

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Maple Leaf in the Hollywoods *By Frank Filman*

If you heard a group of people arguing about who should be ranked as Canada's outstanding contribution to Hollywood, we'd bet a dime to a diamond that you'd never even hear Norman Reilly Raine mentioned. That's because nobody ever reads or remembers the screen credits. And exploitation departments don't publicize writers. What's glamorous about a typewriter pounder?

"Raine?" we can hear you saying. "Who's he?"

Well, he's the ex-Toronto scribe who won the Academy Oscar one year for his screenplay of "The Life of Emile Zola." He turned out "The Fighting 69th," "Each Dawn I Die," "Robin Hood," "The Sea Hawk" and many others. Oh, yes—he created Tugboat Annie for Saturday Evening Post and Warner Brothers.

By now you can see that Mr. Raine is as valuable a piece of human stock as anything on the Warner lot. The Warners know it too. He holds one of those rare long no-option contracts. They can't drop him at any sixth month.

What was the path that led to Hollywood?

"You know," he said, "I've only

had three rejection slips in all my literary life." He expected my surprise.

"It's not as easy as it sounds," he laughed. "I had always wanted to write and I determined to do my best. So I set a harsh standard for myself. I wrote and rewrote endlessly, until I was convinced that the article or story represented the best that was in me. Then I sent it out."

It was Vernon Mackenzie, then editor of Maclean's Magazine, who spurred Raine, and for him Raine has a great affection. Years later it was Mackenzie who was indirectly responsible for the creation of "Tugboat Annie" and for Raine going to Hollywood.

Maclean's printed Norman Reilly Raine's first short story. The editor and his contributor became fast friends, but their paths led in different directions.

The swashbuckling young scribbler had become greatly interested in the sea. He wanted to write about it but felt he wasn't equipped properly—according to his own standards of work. The way to learn about the sea was to live and work on it. Raine became a sailor, and for three years tramped the ocean on all sorts of tubs.

Even after he had gone back to the land, he found no practical use for his marine knowledge. He was making progress as a writer in Maclean's, Saturday Evening Post and other magazines, but had to sell printing, gadgets, etc., to keep eating. He was married in Toronto in 1928. Mr. and Mrs. Raine were in Italy when a message came from Vernon Mackenzie.

Vernon Mackenzie, after having served as an editor of Cosmopolitan, had become the Dean of Journalism at the University of Washington in Seattle. Would Norman like to join the faculty as a lecturer on journalism? It would occupy him for only three months.

So Raine went to Seattle for three months, and stayed three months and a year. Besides journalism, he conducted classes in the short story. It was in Seattle that his years on the water proved their value. It was here that "Tugboat Annie" was born. Keeping her alive for the public benefit added a year to his stay.

Hollywood heard of "Tugboat Annie" and invited her creator to present her through its medium. Dressler's superb characterization brought him a joy known only to the heart of a writer. But the

peculiarities of the strangest town on earth bewildered him. Hollywood, be it known, has the highest percentage of nervous breakdowns of any city in the world. He was not happy. Annie having made her debut, he prepared to leave.

Somebody at Warner Brothers got the idea that Raine might be useful. Flattered, Raine moved to their studios. He got a chance to assert himself, and his feeling for Hollywood changed. They gave him good assignments and he proved his worth.

Norman Reilly Raine's own war experience is a tribute to the spirit of adventure. He was a reporter on a Buffalo newspaper when the first Great War broke out. He was eighteen. Raine crossed the border to Fort Erie and joined up.

Casualties were heavy in those early days and battalions were being reorganized constantly. Raine was in three before being transferred to the Medical Corps. The last part of the War found him in the RAF.

He was discharged in Toronto in 1919 and still regards it as his home. His wife, the former Joyce Pett, is a Queen City girl and part of his family still lives in Toronto.

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